

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall - Council Chamber

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

February 24, 2015

Open Session

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Tsonos. Members Present: Jessica Beauchaine, Nathan Cahoon, Anthony Ferreira, Joel Monteiro, and Charles Tsonos. Also present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

Motion made by Mr. Cahoon that the Committee convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel – R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1); Collective Bargaining R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2); Litigation//Pending Litigation-R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2), seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

The School Committee returned to Public Session.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to return to public session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Report Executive Session Votes – No Votes Taken in Executive Session.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Public Comment I – Agenda Items - None

PTO / PTA Reports - None

Superintendent's Report

8th grade PARCC Assessments –Ms. Beauchaine wanted to clarify that Grade 8 students will not be taking the PARCC exam on a computer.

Middle School Curriculum

Mr. Monteiro questioned the social studies curriculum; it was brought to his attention that the curriculum was not discussed or voted on by the School Committee and that Title 16 states that School Committees must approve curriculum changes; School Committee

had a discussion about a year ago about tiers of classes. Geography was eliminated at the Middle School and High School and some faculty had concerns about that; he requested an explanation from administration about how that was a violation of procedure.

Kim Mercer - not really new; curriculum did not change; we wanted new books because they never had any and that is what was requested.

Mr. Monteiro –School Committee asked to buy books to support the curriculum if teachers needed it; he thought it was supporting materials for what was already in place

Julie Motta, Assistant Superintendent, explained that we cannot get to all the important events in a short amount of time; geography was incorporated in to the scope and sequence document that teachers created and would be aligned to new standards; students are coming unprepared from Middle School and needed more experience in U.S. History.

Mr. Ferreira thought this should have gone in front of the School Committee; he asked about the internet connection at the Career and Technical Center.

Kim Mercer – it was corrected the next day; she sent out information in an email the following day.

Mr. Ferreira – who broke it and who paid for it? Why was geography elimination not brought to the School Committee?

Ms. Beauchaine asked what the curriculum is now; is it aligned with most school districts; does anyone teach it anymore; not part of Common Core.

Mr. Ferreira requested an answer on who has authority to do that and why.

Kim Mercer – did not know the reason at this time, but would talk to the committee who worked on it.

Mr. Monteiro – books and changes in curriculum would have to come before the School Committee; he would like to know who made the decision.

Kim Mercer - curriculum decision made long before books are purchased.

Julie Motta – teachers worked on this last year and over summer and did not bring any concerns forward.

Mr. Monteiro – even if they did not, there is a process to be followed to bring it to the School Committee.

Ms. Beauchaine – would like a copy of the Middle School curriculum; geography may be Common Core; we may not have had any control.

Mr. Monteiro – Department Head at the High School not happy about geography elimination and is concerned; no collaboration.

Mr. Tsonos – Superintendent will provide information in the next packet.

Elementary Report Cards

Elementary Report Cards – Tech Options - Mr. Monteiro – Related to previous discussion about the elementary report cards, asked for an update if the existing report card has been set up in Skyward.

Kim Mercer – standards based report card is being tweaked now; Mrs. Gendron spent the entire summer building and the report card is about ready; there is no reason to put a smaller one in only to delete it; it is close to being done and teachers will be presenting it at one of the March meetings. A discussion continued about standards based grading and grading to an end of year standard versus quarterly standards. Kim Mercer recommended using whatever report card the Committee comes up with. Mr. Tsonos noted that further discussion would be needed.

Nike partnership- Ms. Beauchaine received emails from parents

questioning why they are being told they need to buy specific items for sports; she asked if there is a legal document with Nike and if anyone in administration reviewed it.

Mr. Duarte, Athletic Director, explained that this pertains to a deal with Lids Team; parents do not buy uniforms and there is no line item in the athletic budget for uniforms; the last 15 or so years, uniforms have been purchased by the team through fundraising.

Ms. Beauchaine asked to put this on the next agenda for a line item at High School level; she worked the organization that paid for almost all the uniforms at the Middle Schools.

Mr. Duarte explained that we were offered a partnership in October with discounts; 40% off Nike only was one of the offers.

Ms. Beauchaine questioned why the written agreement was never brought to the School Committee; where does that agreement fit in. Mr. Duarte said he was told it was not necessary.

Discussion took place:

Mr. Monteiro – it was an agreement, not a contract; how does it compare to others.

Mr. Duarte – before we could make our own deals with vendors and that worked out well for us; no one was told they have to buy anything; uniforms are bought through fund raising and the Athletic Department.

Ms. Beauchaine – she was asked by a parent about a contract with Nike assuming she would know as a School Committee member.

Mr. Ferreira – put in a request for a copy of whatever he signed to be put in packet.

Ms. Beauchaine would like to know how much do we have regarding reward money by going with this company; she wants that information in the packet.

Mr. Tsonos– requested that legal make sure this was handled properly.

Facilities Report

Door Project – Kim Mercer explained that the Project Manager, Mr. Roberts, not present; report was handed out. Mr. Cahoon - Facilities Meeting was held on Tuesday and Mr. Roberts provided two schedules on the alarm and door projects.

Mr. Ferreira – projected start date 2/15/15 to remove and replace doors; he requested to be informed about the project as it progressed; are the doors in and has the project been started; we hired SBS to track the door and fire alarm projects and he would like written information by the next meeting. Further discussion took place regarding the attendance of the Project Manager at School Committee meetings.

Mr. Ferreira requested information on what happened at the Career and Technical School. Kelly Ahrens explained that a fiber optic cable

at the school was severed by a snow removal truck. Mr. Ferreira requested a copy of the bill and cancelled check because he wants to make we are reimbursed for the repairs. Mr. Ferreira noted that some thermostats at the high school are not working and we need to get that corrected.

Director of Facilities – Update – Superintendent Mercer stated that the interview committee would be meeting next Wednesday and Thursday. Mr. Ferreira requested information regarding who would be on the committee; also, painter and carpenter positions were approved in October 2014; why wait until we get a Facilities Director. Discussion took place about the Facilities Director position and that the final three candidates should have walk tour of our buildings.

Action Items

Personnel Actions:

Leave of Absence

Sheri Mancinho (Year 2)-Grade 3 Teacher Whiteknact-Effective 2015-2016 School Year

Rosemary Stein (Year 2) Grade 2 Teacher-Silver Spring-Effective 2015/2016 School Year

Retirement

Maryann Amaral-Special Education Teacher-RMS-Effective 2/27/2015

Appointment

**Stephanie Munro-Teacher Assistant-Whiteknact-Effective
2/23/15-From Supervisory Assistant to Teacher Assistant**

**One Layoff due To Performance Effective End of 2014/2015 School
Year**

**Motion to approve by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Ferreira.
Vote 5-0.**

**Solar panel project – Clean Economy Development, LLC – Julian
Dash attended to follow up to the Facilities Sub Committee meeting
held two weeks ago; he is looking into a professional services
agreement for solar projects across the district; he works with
nonprofits and would like to determine which school buildings might
work for solar panels; he has worked with the city on renewable
energy and would like to take an initial assessment on 12 buildings to
determine if some pass for solar and put together a finished package;
he requested permission to move forward; this would not bind the
district; this is a two phase agreement and he would have to come
back to School Committee to present the results and to receive
approval.**

Discussion:

Ms. Beauchaine stated that she would not be comfortable making any

decisions on this until we have a Facilities Director in place; also noted that the paperwork states “city.”

Mr. Dash – city is technically the owner of the buildings and many times the agreement is with the city.

Mr. Cahoon requested a timeline for the project.

Mr. Dash – stated that March 10th is the deadline, which is probably unlikely; if we miss the April deadline, we will not be able to get funds this year; he would be happy to move forward with no physical work done until School Committee approves the final project and the Facilities Director is in place, since this can take 60-90 days.

Mr. Monteiro – what happens to funds if the project does not go forward?

Mr. Dash – grant funds do not come until end of project; if it does not move forward, no funds.

Mr. Cahoon noted that the School Committee could authorize the Superintendent to go forward pending legal counsel checking the agreement.

Mr. Monteiro –we will not hit the March date.

Mr. Dash– if we miss April deadline, we miss the funding.

Mr. Monteiro –we could ask the Superintendent to correct the agreement and have legal review it.

Mr. Dash - would have to submit March 10th document; tight but should be able to make it.

Mr. Monteiro had concerns that School Committee would not get the documents in time in order for the School Committee to own it;

motion by Mr. Monteiro to table this request for corrected documents and to communicate with the Superintendent in order to have legal counsel review before the School Committee receives it, so they can make a decision, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 4-1; Mr. Ferreira voted against it because he felt that there are already enough issues with door project and other issues running late and he did not feel the Superintendent should have to be involved in another project at this time.

Discussion about doors and installation:

Mr. Ferreira – noted that on the bottom of the plan, it is marked “shop drawings approved 2/20/15” but the School Committee was told months ago that the shop drawings were done; he was not happy with the paperwork and would like a copy of all itemized bills from project manager company.

Mr. Monteiro noted there are two different types of doors.

Mr. Ferreira - they said “shop drawings were done” but no one asked further questions. He would like to request that the Superintendent get a weekly update; someone has to track this; no penalty clause in the contract. Mr.Tsonos – we will get some answers soon especially at the Facilities Meeting.

Assessment Issues – Mr. Cahoon stated that the letter previously discussed had been edited and requested that the letter be approved by School Committee in order to transmit it to local legislators with a

copy to RI Department of Education. Motion by Mr. Monteiro to approve, seconded by Mr. Ferreira on approval of letter regarding assessment issues. Vote 5-0.

Discussion:

Mr. Monteiro –noted that the second piece of assessments was corrected last meeting; continue question of assessments; some value with the assessments that go on in our schools; he requested that the School Committee take a position that there will be no further top-down assessments in our schools without approval by School Committee with question/answer of individuals involved in order to eliminate top down type and discussion of the value of the assessment.

Mr. Cahoon - we are revising the policy book; write up that very thing as a policy.

Mr. Monteiro – would like to have a formal policy, but as of today this is to stop assessments from being implemented; some already scheduled; he wants to make sure none created if it does not come before the School Committee; should be approved by our teachers; he wants to make sure if it goes in the classroom it has value; if majority do not like it, should not have been implemented; let our kids continue to learn.

Mr. Ferreira – ask Julie Motta, Assistant Superintendent, if this will slow down program presented last night; he was impressed with some great work there; his concern is that this will put bumps in the

road for the future. Julie Motta – problem not at the elementary level. Mr. Ferreira – will support this, but hopes other schools will as well. Mr. Monteiro – if in place, would not touch that; but something introduced like a top down directive should come before School Committee.

Ms. Beauchaine – do not like to tell teachers what to do without hearing from them; she is against son taking NECAP but he has to take it; it does not help anyone but if money from it helps the School Department; nine years has not seen anything like the presentation showed about how the test is being used in that school; if teachers will have this, she is for this; come or contact us; she does not hear from them, but hears from the parents.

Mr. Monteiro – parent should ask what the assessment is for; data; he wants to justify what is coming in and to have School Committee approval; in his opinion, RIDE over-assesses and we need to look at that.

Julie Motta – we are doing no additional assessments which are not mandated.

Ms. Beauchaine – policy committee judgment for first and second passage.

Mr. Monteiro– ask for balance of this school year; no additional assessments- top down directives; without School Committee approval.

Andrew Thomas, Legal Counsel - advised that we do not want to go

against the Commissioner of Education even if RIDE directed; want to be informed to have information and discussion and not try to veto.

Requisitions – Bill List – Linda Dykeman, Deputy Director of Finance, presented warrants for payment:

Warrant #

1472 2-13-15 \$ 57,664.94 (approved last month)

1474 2-18-15 \$ 1,000.00

1475 2-19-15 \$ 6,825.76

1476 2-19-15 \$1,191,577.95

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to authorize payment of the warrants, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Construction Invoices

Bahry Building – Whiteknact Roof – Payment Requested - \$25,351.08

Discussion: Mr. Ferreira – Make payment of \$25,351.08.

Linda Dykeman requested discussion with the architects.

Mr. Ferreira made a motion to leave \$4,000.00 balance on the table; seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Egress Door Repair - \$567.12

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Orlo Fire Alarm Upgrade - \$5,581.20

Mr. Ferreira will vote no; no motion made.

SMMA – Invoice # 42210 and 42283 Accessibility Upgrades - \$10,500.98

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Duarte Corporation – RMS Ramp and Sidewalk - \$19,889.79 – Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

E.W. Burman Inc. – Door Replacement - \$4,275.00 – Burman will not be paid because Project Manager does not keep us informed; Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

E.W. Burman – Invoice 2375 – Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0

Old Business

Public Comment II – Non Agenda

Chrissy Rossi spoke about a RI Philharmonic Program available to students; some have taken part, but not wide spread participation; provides textbooks, workbooks, recorders and students play with RI Philharmonic; she will make the information available to all the Principals; would like to work into the curriculum to play with the

Philharmonic.

Announcements

Izilda Teves - appreciated the presentation made yesterday by Assistant Superintendent, Julie Motta.

I/T Director, Kelly Ahrens mentioned that three schools are in a pilot program; she asked for budget line item for the department for workshops? Mr. Monteiro – she was referring to when the auditors leave, the final audit will be presented at the next meeting.

Izilda - Black History Month at City Hall tomorrow; Orange Leaf 5-9 Wednesday to raise funds for field trips.

Mr. Ferreira requested snow removal bills for High School; Clean Care bill and staff costs.

Kim Mercer – sent to our insurer, Interlocal Trust.

Mr. Cahoon – Kent Heights – Silent Auction on March 15th and High School PTSA Flamingo Project; information on the website.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Nathan Cahoon, Clerk of the Committee